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ABSTRACT

This manual provides a detailed outline of the collaborative efforts between the New York City Public Schools, the city's Community School District 6, and community-based partners to develop a community school in the northern Manhattan neighborhood of Washington Heights. The community school would be an integral part of the community and contain all health and welfare services of a large social service agency under one roof of the public school. It describes the steps taken to reach program goals, some of the obstacles encountered, and the overall philosophy that inspired the effort. Chapters describe how to conduct an assessment of community needs and the matching of services to meet these needs, review the key ingredients within a community school philosophy, explain ways of overcoming conflicts with existing groups and institutions in the area, and explore how to locate adequate funding to support the program. The report concludes with suggestions on the first steps that need to be taken to start a community school. Contains a list of other resources and 13 items for suggested readings. (CM)

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ED 381 587

Building A Community School

A Revolutionary Design In Public Education

The Children's Aid Society

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A Revolutionary Design In Public Education

The Children's Aid Society

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Acknowledgments

Inherent in the nature of the community school is the assumption that we can overcome many more challenges when we work together than we can on our own. That was certainly true of the effort in Washington Heights that you will learn about in this manual. When the doors to IS 218 and PS 5 opened to the children of this community, it was the culmination of a collective effort of an extremely diverse group of individuals and organizations committed to improving the lives of the city's children. To that end, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all of the people who made this vision a reality.

First of all, we must thank the City of New York and Mayor David N. Dinkins for accepting this challenge and giving us all of the support and guidance we needed to make this happen. The community schools of Washington Heights should serve as enduring symbols of the Mayor's innovative spirit for many years to come.

Thanks also to New York City Public Schools' Chancellor Joseph Fernandez, Deputy Chancellors Stanley Litow and Harvey Robbins and the New York City Board of Education for sharing our dream of a community school and giving us the opportunity to join forces with the schools of Washington Heights.

Special thanks go to President Robert Jackson and the members of Community School Board 6, especially Superintendent Anthony Amato and IS 218 principal, Dr. Mark Kavarsky, for working hand-in-hand with us in designing, planning and implementing the community school program. Because of their willingness to open up the system to include new partners in the education of the children of Washington Heights, we have in IS 218 and PS 5 two shining examples of what is possible for children nationwide.

Also, without the financial support of The Charles Hayden Foundation and The Clark Foundation when this project was still in its planning stage, none of our ambitious plans and good intentions could have been executed. Our very sincere thanks to both of these institutions.

Thanks must also be extended to many other partners and colleagues in Washington Heights, including the Association of Progressive Dominicans (ACDP) and New York City Councilman Guillermo Linares, and Moises Perez, Executive Director of Alianza Dominicana. Thanks also to Deans Mary Ann Quaranta and Bertram Beck at Fordham University's School of Social Work and Max Wiener at the School of Education for helping us develop and conduct an evaluation for measuring our accomplishments. Special thanks also to Helene and Alexander Abraham for all of their assistance and to the many people whose numbers make it impossible to list them by name, but who are crucial to our success every day.

Last, but by no means least, we wish to extend our thanks to the people of Washington Heights. Their determined spirit and overwhelming commitment to securing a quality education and a better future for their children has been a constant source of inspiration for us all.

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Introduction

In 1989, The Children's Aid Society of New York City joined in an unprecedented partnership with the New York City Public Schools, the city's Community School District 6 and community-based partners to develop a comprehensive response to the pressing needs of children and families in the northern Manhattan neighborhood of Washington Heights.

The challenge was a formidable one. A 1987 needs assessment conducted by The Children's Aid Society found a neighborhood struggling with the city's most overcrowded schools, a large population of poor, first-generation immigrant families, many young people at risk of dropping out of school, and not enough assistance from the city's large social service providers. But it also found a community with a drive to succeed and a determination to help its children be they best they could be. Recognizing the urgent need for services, The Children's Aid Society began to survey the community for possible sites to open a new community center in Washington Heights. We soon learned that The New York City School Construction Authority was planning to build several new schools in the community. The answer seemed obvious: Instead of building a new community center, we would forge an alliance to open a revolutionary new kind of school, called a "community school."

The community school would be an integral part of the community and contain all of the health and welfare services of a large social service agency under the roof of the public school. It would serve as a focal point in the community to which children and their parents could turn for education and all those other services they sorely need. Medical, dental, mental health, recreation, supplemental education, youth programs, parent education, family life education and summer camping services would all emanate from this one institution. And that institution would be open six days a week, 15 hours a day, year-round. What we proposed was not to use the schools from 3:00 to 10:00 every day, but to work side-by-side with the parents, school and the community to ensure that children are given every chance to succeed.

The plan answered the calls of many policy experts who have contended

for years that services for disadvantaged families were too fragmented to meet their multiple and interconnected needs, that educational achievement cannot occur if children and their families are in crisis, that teachers are too often required to serve as social workers and that parents were being left out of the educational picture.

Our vision became a reality in March of 1992 when Salome Ureña Middle Academies IS 218 opened its doors. And one year later, our second community school, PS 5, opened in Washington Heights. Both schools have created a sense of excitement and renewed hope in this community.

It's still too early to gauge the long-term outcomes of the Washington Heights community schools. But many positive signs have been noted. IS 218 students scored an average of 79 on their Preliminary Competency Test in writing this year, compared to an average score of 64 at a neighboring school with a comparable enrollment. Attendance rates at IS 218 are the highest in the district and nearly half the school population and 600 parents are enrolled in a wide variety of school activities. Demand for services at the school's Family Resource Center indicates that the center is filling a critical void in the community.

This manual provides a detailed outline of this innovative collaboration, describing the steps we had to take to reach our goals, some of the obstacles we encountered along the way and the overall philosophy that inspired our every move. The manual is designed to serve as an illustration of what is possible, not a rigid plan. By sharing with other communities the success we have had in Washington Heights, we hope to provide a model for schools, parents, social service agencies and governments in other communities to develop their own creative collaborations.

Philip Coltoff

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Why Community Schools?

New Realities for Children and Families

The Community School Response

Why Community Schools?

There is no question in the minds of most Americans that our public school system needs to be radically transformed if it is going to prepare our children to compete and thrive in today's world. The question is: What form should that change take?

There have been a myriad of reforms instituted in school districts across the country, resulting in a veritable patchwork of innovations over the last ten years. But despite the push for reform, American schools still operate very much the way they did in the industrial age when their charge was to educate our factory workers and farmers. In reality, very little about our nation and its families remains the same.

Indeed, educational achievement has never been more important than it is today. Gone are the days when a person could drop out of high school and still be assured a good job. Low-skill manufacturing jobs that were once the mainstay of working class America are shrinking across the country. Today's economy demands educated workers who can think critically, solve problems and make decisions. But as educational achievement becomes an increasingly decisive factor in our children's — and nation's — ability to thrive, many new obstacles to educational achievement are appearing on the horizon.

New Realities for Children and Families

Clearly, fundamental changes will be needed if we are going to keep up with a drastically changing nation. And one factor that is changing most dramatically is the American family. In addition to the explosion in single-parent families struggling to keep their children fed, clothed and out of trouble, we have also witnessed a rise in drug and alcohol addiction, physical and sexual abuse, neglect and other threats to children.

In the 1992 "Kids Count Data Book," the Center for the Study of Social Policy and The Annie E. Casey Foundation reported on the conditions of America's children. According to this report, the United States made no progress or slipped backward in seven of nine measures of child well-being during the 1980's, including child poverty, births to unmarried teens, single-parent families, low birth weight babies, high school graduation rates, teen violent death and the number of youngsters in juvenile custody. In the report's forward, the authors write: "We begin with a focus on what may add up to one of the most pivotal developments in late 20th century America: the change in the capacity of typical families to raise their children well."

According to a Children's Defense Fund/Northeastern University study, child poverty today hovers at forty percent and the trends are "most discouraging for young black and Hispanic families and for those with little education." Along with that poverty comes a range of problems — inadequate housing, poor nutrition and insufficient health care — that can have a powerful impact on a child's ability to perform and their motivation to stay in school.

The Community School Response

Traditionally, public schools have been structured primarily to achieve academic goals. But increasingly our schools are finding that before their students can achieve, emotional, social and health needs must be addressed. In fact, many schools have complained that despite dwindling resources for the most basic programs, they have been forced to serve as surrogate families and social service agencies to their students — often at the expense of education.

In contrast, community schools are designed to enhance educational innovation by bringing schools, parents and community agencies together to ensure that every child is emotionally and physically prepared to learn. Rather than asking teachers to be both teachers and social workers, community schools integrate into the fundamental design of the school the critical emo-

tional, social and health services that students need to achieve and that families need to remain viable and strong. The community school is not meant to replace the traditional roles of families or teachers, but to provide vital support to both. Much more than one-stop shopping centers for education and social services, they are the center of community life and community activity.

For social service providers and schools alike, the community school can be a cost-effective way to serve the community. Instead of spending money to build or maintain a separate facility, resources can go directly to programs. By working in partnership with other community agencies, a streamlined system of services can be coordinated to leverage resources and avoid redundancy. For schools, the community schools collaboration can relieve some of the time pressures teachers face in their attempts to serve as teacher, guidance counselor and social worker, giving them more time to plan and prepare lessons. Educational enrichment activities and family support services offered through the community school make education dollars that much more meaningful.

The philosophy behind the community school is not new. Several states, including California, Florida, New York, New Jersey and Kentucky, have proposed or initiated programs that integrate health, mental health and other supportive services in public schools. Two national organizations, the American Public Welfare Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, have sponsored a special project, Joining Forces, to promote collaboration between education and social welfare agencies. What sets the Washington Heights initiative apart is that it is one of the most ambitious and comprehensive models of its kind in one of the nation's most troubled neighborhoods.

A United Effort From the Start

The Critical Partners

Other Possible Partners

Clear and Common Goals

Challenges and Rewards

A United Effort From the Start

For community schools to be effective and long-lived, they must be developed as true collaborative partnerships that are based on common goals and shared decision-making. Planning and implementation cannot be dominated by any one partner — whether it be the school, the health and human service agencies or the parents association. Maintaining this balance is critical from the earliest planning stages and throughout the program's operation.

The Critical Partners

The earlier you involve all of these critical partners, the better your chances will be of developing a workable and effective plan with support and cooperation from all sides. The community school team should include:

SCHOOLS — including central board of education members, local school board representatives, school principals and faculty representatives.

SOCIAL SERVICE AND YOUTH SERVING AGENCIES — including community-based and comprehensive service agency leaders with experience in providing recreational and educational programs, health and mental health services, foster care prevention and other human services. Other agencies that have specialized skills may also be needed in your community, including immigration assistance and advocacy, translation services, public entitlement help and housing assistance.

PARENTS ASSOCIATIONS AND OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS — those people who can provide a lay person's perspective on the services to be provided, who will help to spread the word about the community school's services and goals and create a sense of ownership in friends and family in the community.

CHILDREN — those who will be most dramatically affected by the changes that take place should be given a way to contribute to the community school effort. By including children in the planning and implementation of the program, you will help ensure that your school reflects the needs of children as they perceive them. It also gives students genuine opportunities to develop leadership skills and a sense of responsibility for what happens in their community.

FUNDERS — including private funders and government agencies, who can provide input and expertise on program planning and implementation.

Other Possible Partners

Since the overriding emphasis of the community school is cooperation and collaboration, there should always be room for new partners. Even if they are not involved from the early planning stages, these new partners can play an appropriate and meaningful role in the school if you recognize their value and work to include them. The idea is to look at resources available in the community and make them work within the community school partnership. Some of these partners might include:

- Area Hospitals
- Community Foundations
- Police
- Local Universities
- Vocational Schools
- Local Businesses and Corporations
- Employers
- Libraries

Clear and Common Goals

For many, the balancing act needed for a community school collaboration will require a drastic shift in work style. Participating agencies may have to change how they deliver services to children and families and learn to work alongside other community agencies. School principals and school boards will

have to share some of their decision-making power over what goes on in their schools with other members of the community school team.

In Washington Heights, specific problem areas were recognized from the very beginning: Who makes decisions on allocating space in the school? How do you control access to rooms with valuable equipment and materials such as the computer room, library or music rooms? How would custodial contracts and opening fees be fulfilled? To facilitate problem-solving in these and other areas, ground rules were established early in the planning process. Essentially, The Children's Aid Society, the school district and the Board of Education agreed to tackle each issue step-by-step, keeping the larger goal of making the schools work for the children of Washington Heights in mind at all times. Yes, each group may have its own agenda and concerns, but at the same time they share a dedication and commitment to making this project work for children and families.

Challenges and Rewards

However challenging, these efforts at unity and teamwork will pay off in the long run. The team approach allows you to bring the expertise of a wide range of fields to bear on the particular problems community children and families face. Instead of perpetuating the fragmented delivery of services, which treats each family problem in isolation, according to a particular specialty, the team approach encourages the growth of a seamless system that can look at the whole picture and respond with comprehensive solutions. By building a team that includes parents and other community residents, service providers and representatives of the school system — and including them from the very early planning stages — you create a sense of community ownership and support of the program, avoid the wasteful duplication of services and promote cost-effective and holistic solutions. Together, the community schools team can accomplish much more than any one team member could accomplish alone.

Assessing Community Needs

Laying the Groundwork in Washington Heights

Looking at the Community's Strengths

Essential Steps

Assessing Community Needs

To design a community school that will truly respond to the range of needs that children and their families share, there must be a clear understanding of what those specific needs are and what resources and services already exist in their community.

This may seem like an obvious statement, but sometimes in the rush to provide services in communities where there is clearly much work to be done, we fail to step back and take the time to examine the unique characteristics of the community to be served. By doing so, we may create a needless duplication of services or, worse, overlook some critical, but basic service needs. Some communities will have an abundance of quality health services and will not need to include these services in their community school. An impressive parent education program offered by a local college will eliminate the need for such a program at another community school.

No one community school model will fit all settings and work well in all cases. And most attempts to impose on a community a prefabricated plan that worked well somewhere else will be met with skepticism and resentment. A successful community school will be designed and tailored in tune with the history, current conditions and political realities of a specific neighborhood. In the long run, patience and careful planning will yield positive results.

Laying the Groundwork in Washington Heights

In 1987, five years before the first community school opened in Washington Heights, The Children's Aid Society began its needs assessment as a first step in determining whether the 140-year-old agency would expand its

services into the Washington Heights community. Through data analysis, interviews and observation, researchers examined the demographics, economic circumstances, housing issues, employment patterns and other quality of life issues facing Washington Heights residents. They also surveyed the services that were available to neighborhood families at that time. They found a community with a large poor, Latino population, many of whom were recent immigrants of the Dominican Republic. Like many immigrant communities, Washington Heights families are hard working and consider educational achievement to be the key to their children's success, but they also face many economic, cultural and language barriers that stand in the way of achievement:

- ✓ In 1987, Washington Heights contained more residents with an income below $10,000 (40 percent of the neighborhood's population) than any other district in New York City.
- ✓ With 25 percent of its population under 18 years of age, Washington Heights had the largest youth population and the most overcrowded school system in Manhattan.
- ✓ The community ranked last among New York City's 32 school districts in percentage of students reading at or above grade level, but second among New York City precincts in juvenile reports filed for truancy, drug abuse and child abuse reports.

Despite the acute need for primary health care and for broader health counseling, family planning and youth support services in the district, there are few service providers in the area:

- ✓ Washington Heights was not served by any of the major youth organizations.
- ✓ According to community leaders, the need for professional counseling and treatment programs for families was overwhelming. Many believed that this was probably the greatest need in the neighborhood overall.
- ✓ Only one public service program served the infants and toddlers of Washington Heights.

- ✓ While parents surveyed felt that dental care was the greatest health service need, the study also found a significant lack of family planning, drug treatment and lead poisoning prevention programs and a great need for inexpensive primary care. Only one private hospital serves this district. There are no public hospitals in the community.
- ✓ Many families in Washington Heights are not eligible for Medicaid and do not have health coverage of any kind.

Looking at the Community's Strengths

Understanding your community's needs means more than identifying its problems; you should also look at the strengths that can be used as resources in building the community school. In Washington Heights, there are many such strengths that enriched the design and implementation process:

- ✓ Most of the residents are part of tight-knit, extended families.
- ✓ The community places a high value on its children.
- ✓ An upwardly aspiring and hopeful spirit pervades the community.
- ✓ Residents have a strong entrepreneurial drive

Ultimately, the realization of the community school's potential may rely as much on these strengths as on its program and service components.

Essential Steps in Assessing Need

Clearly, the process of assessing community need is enhanced by the full participation of the partners involved in designing the community school, including parent association members, school boards, teachers, administrators, community-based organizations and other human service agencies, but the process cannot rely wholly on the opinions and gut instincts of the partners involved. To take a thorough and objective reading of the community's service needs and come to a clear understanding of community residents and the complexity of their lives, an extensive and professional needs assessment must be

completed. This is true for the establishment of any new service, but particularly for a community school program that is designed to integrate and streamline services for children and families.

At a minimum, this needs assessment should include the following steps:

1. Using available data from the local, state and federal governments, census tracts and other appropriate sources, examine the demographics of the community, including the racial or cultural make-up of its residents, median income, the percentage of residents receiving public assistance, housing conditions and costs, crime rates and school performance measures such as attendance and drop-out rates, reading and math scores and overcrowding.

2. Interview a broad range of families and children living in the community to learn about their individual needs and strengths and gain new insight into their perceptions of the community's needs on the whole.

3. Interview community leaders, school personnel and health and human service agency staffs to gain their perspectives on the special needs of the community, the efficacy and range of all services offered in the community and the barriers that prevent families from accessing those services.

4. Develop a complete list of the resources and services currently available in the community, including a detailed description of the program areas they cover.

Needs assessment is a critical first step in understanding and planning for the needs of your community. The more time you take to include the experiences and viewpoints of all of the key constituencies in your community and incorporate these views and realities into your program design, the more responsive and effective your community school will be.

Notes

IS 218:
A Look at What is Possible

Making Room for Families

Addressing Total Health Needs

Innovative Structure

Before and After School Programs

Summer Programs

Community Development

Giving Parents a Place to Turn

With freshly painted walls, comfortable couches and plants thriving in the sunshine, the Family Resource Center at IS 218 in Washington Heights could be mistaken for a midtown Manhattan office. Few schools in New York City — or any city — have so inviting a room dedicated specifically to parents and families.

Located just inside the main entrance to IS 218, the Family Resource Center is the "first point of access" to the school for parents in Washington Heights. It's a bustling place with a constant stream of children, parents, staff and volunteers and the frenetic buzz of conversation in English and Spanish. Parents are always welcome in the resource center, whether to wait for their children, rest their feet for a moment, look into adult education opportunities or get assistance with a special problem.

The primary objective of the center is to serve as a front-line defense against the kinds of problems that can keep children from achieving in school. "If a child's family is experiencing difficulties like unemployment or homelessness or if he comes to school sick or hungry, teachers are going to find it very difficult to teach and the child is going to find it very difficult to learn and achieve," said IS 218's principal, Dr. Mark Kavarsky. "We have got to address these realities in the lives of our students and give them and their families whatever support they need to succeed. This collaboration allows us to do that."

Parents who are struggling with a new language or culture can come to the center to get help in completing immigration and naturalization papers, sign up for English as a Second Language and GED classes or talk with a social worker about a family problem. Center staff and volunteers provide referrals to outside agencies, arrange appointments for other on-site services and accompany families to appointments when needed. Job counseling, housing assistance, emergency food assistance or legal aid all fall under the resource center's umbrella of services, giving parents a place to turn when life's daily pressures get too great. But the center also generates opportunities for parents to learn and have fun, like classes in aerobics, drama, computer and weight training and workshops on topics like family budgeting and parenting skills.

The Center is staffed by social workers, paraprofessionals, parents and other volunteers. More than 25 parent volunteers now work in the Family Resource Center and school health clinic, wearing special uniforms that they designed and made themselves. These volunteers are part of a stipended program which is training them to become dental assistants, secretaries and receptionists.

"An integral part of our mission is making this school the center of the community and integral to that is the involvement of parents," said Richard Negron, program director for The Children's Aid Society at IS 218. "The Family Resource Center helps give parents a sense of ownership over the program and makes them feel welcome in the school community, but at the same time it meets very basic needs in this neighborhood."

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IS 218: A Look at What is Possible

Opened in March 1992, IS 218 is the first school to open under the Washington Heights community school partnership between The Children's Aid Society, Community School Board 6 and the New York City Board of Education. In February of 1993, PS 5 opened its doors to elementary school children in the area.

Housed in gleaming new school buildings, constructed by the New York City School Construction Authority to alleviate school overcrowding in the district, both IS 218 and PS 5 are scheduled to be open fifteen hours a day, six days a week, year-round. The Washington Heights community school partners had input from the very early stages of building design and construction to ensure that these new buildings would accommodate the special needs of the community school program. But building community schools is not simply about building new buildings, it is about transforming the schools we have today to be as effective as they can be.

The goal is to shape a "seamless" fusion of school day activities with extended-day programs, health and family supports that will enhance student learning. The Children's Aid Society and other community-based agency staff work closely with the school principal and staff. A teacher can walk down the hall to tell a social worker about a student whose grades have suddenly plummeted. And a counselor can stop by a teacher's classroom to see if a student they've been seeing is showing any signs of improvement. The community school structure means help is often just a walk away.

Making Room for Families

Just inside the school's main entrance is a Family Resource Center that is open to all members of the community. Staffed by bilingual social workers paraprofessionals, parents and other volunteers in this heavily Latino community, the resource center is designed to encourage parents' closer involvement in their children's education by addressing parent or family needs that may impede school success. Center staff and volunteers explain services, help complete forms, arrange access to other on-site services, provide referrals to outside agencies and accompany families to appointments as needed. They help parents with immigration requirements, tenant's rights issues, job counseling, emergency food assistance or legal aid. English as a Second Language, GED classes and a full schedule of workshops on health and parenting issues are offered through the Family Resource Center.

Addressing Total Health Needs

Next door to the resource center is a full-service medical and dental clinic where children can receive exams and treatment during the school day, saving their parents the expense and stress of missing a day of work. A staff nurse practitioner and visiting medical students and doctors provide physical exams, treatment for illnesses, vaccinations, booster shots and referrals to other health care facilities in the community. The clinic also conducts vision and hearing exams and developmental testing. A fully-equipped professional dental clinic allows for dental exams and care, including teeth cleanings, fillings and extractions. An on-site mental health center provides individual and group counseling and referrals for children and their families. All services are available to all children and families in the community, even if they are not enrolled at the community school.

Bringing Health Care to the People

Sometimes making sure that disadvantaged children get the health care they need requires more than opening the doors to a sparkling new clinic. First, you have to understand what the barriers to health care have been in the first place.

When The Children's Aid Society first began examining access to health care in Washington Heights, it learned that despite an extremely concentrated population and an acute need for services, there are few primary health care providers in the community. The district is served by no public hospitals and only one private hospital. Many families in Washington Heights are not eligible for Medicaid and do not have health coverage of any kind.

But the shortage of health care facilities was not the only problem. It seemed that language, cultural and economic barriers left many families in this largely Dominican community afraid to go to clinics and hospitals. Consequently, many children in this community have never seen a doctor or dentist. To reach these children, the community school partnership had to devise a system that would provide for extensive outreach into the community and help demystify medical care for neighborhood families.

The solution was to implement a two-step strategy: a mobile health unit would provide immediate outreach and service, while full clinics built into the new community schools would provide long-term primary and preventive care. (The Children's Aid Society owned a Mobile Health Unit that could be made available in the community, but other agencies might solve a similar problem by collaborating with another health care provider or a hospital outreach program.)

Making stops at Head Start centers and public schools throughout Washington Heights, the Mobile Health Unit is a custom-designed van with a fully equipped pediatric and dental clinic. Van staff provide vision and hearing examinations, blood tests for lead poisoning and sickle-cell anemia, WIC certification, immunizations, booster shots, check-ups and screenings for developmental delays and disabilities. Dental check-ups, cleanings and complete dental treatment are also provided on the van.

For thousands of children and families who have little experience with doctors and dentists, the van is an introduction to health services. However, the ultimate goal is to bring them into the school-based clinics for regular medical and dental exams and care. Health services in the schools replicate those in The Children's Aid Society's Harlem centers and include full medical and dental care, food and nutrition programs, medical referrals, drug prevention counseling, teen pregnancy prevention counseling and mental health counseling, for both children and their families.

The clinics are staffed by doctors, nurse practitioners, dentists and dental technicians, who are affiliated with nearby hospitals and university centers. As part of their medical training, students from nearby Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center spend one day a week at the school clinic, conducting medical examinations and treating illnesses. Patients who need specialized care are referred to physicians at the hospital. And patients at the school dental clinic are regularly referred to Columbia Presbyterian's School of Dental and Oral Surgery for more complicated procedures like root canal or orthodontic work. So the clinic has become a mechanism for medical training and research as well as for health service delivery.

The first-year goals of the community school clinics include the completion of a health and nutrition profile for every youngster in the schools, full medical and dental care for every child and a 100 percent vaccination rate against childhood diseases. Longer term, the goal is to address the relationship between health, academic and emotional problems, emphasizing the needs of the "total child" from a location that is central to child and family life.

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Innovative Structure

IS 218 divides its 1200 students into four theme-based Academies or "mini-schools" of approximately 300 students each: Business, Community Services, Expressive Arts, and Mathematics, Science and Technology. This allows for a smaller, more personal school experience for students. Each academy has two self-contained units with five classes and five teachers who act as advisors to the students in their units. Several times a week, advisory groups of 15 students meet to talk about personal issues — from school and career issues to problems they may have with family or friends. The school curricula draw from the latest educational reforms, including interdisciplinary instruction, flexible scheduling and hands-on, cooperative learning.

Before and After School Programs

The school building opens at 7:00 am, when children can enjoy a full breakfast and attend one of the school's "zero" period classes in dance, Latin band and sports. After the regular school day ends at 3:00, an "extended-day program" engages students in educational enrichment classes, mentoring, sports, computer lab, music, arts, trips and entrepreneurial workshops.

Educational enrichment activities include tutoring or homework help as well as two additional 90-minute school periods in the day in topics like English as a Second Language, Advanced English and Advanced Math. The educational enrichment activities are designed by teachers according to their academy's special emphasis, helping to ensure continuity and reinforcement of educational themes. Many of the school's teachers also work in the extended-day program, allowing them to actively recruit students for their special classes and get to know their students in a more relaxed and open atmosphere. IS 218 students can also take part in school-wide activities in recreation and the arts.

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Whether they are educational or recreational, all of the after school activities are voluntary. And nearly half the student body choose to extend their school day in this way.

In the evening, teenagers from the community can enjoy the school's recreational facilities and participate in arts and crafts activities, rap groups, career readiness workshops, leadership training and family life/human sexuality workshops. Adults can come to the school to learn English, take aerobics classes, attend parent skills training and family budgeting workshops and entrepreneurial skills training.

Summer Programs

To reinforce the sense of community and learning that exists during the school year, a variety of summer activities and camp experiences are available for IS 218 youngsters and those living nearby. A Teen Travel Camp takes children to museums, parks, historic sites, beaches, pools and other attractions. An Entrepreneurial Camp immerses Business Academy Students in the development of small businesses. Younger children can attend a school-based summer day camp, while others travel to The Children's Aid Society's day camps on Staten Island and in Chappaqua, New York.

Community Development

The unique mission of the community school has led to many projects at IS 218 that go beyond other school-based efforts and other school and community partnerships. In addition to a Parent Advisory Council of 1,000 members, a Family Institute now offers an expanded curriculum of education for the entire community and is expected to be self-funding after two years. A locally recruited Business Advisory Council provides technical assistance to the Business

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Using Economic Change to Drive Social Change

When children are given an opportunity to apply what they learn in the classroom to real-life circumstances, they will always learn more than when subjects are presented in the abstract. That is a concept that guides much of the instruction at IS 218, but it is especially true of the school's Entrepreneurial Studies Program.

Students in the after school Entrepreneurial Studies Program — all recruits from the school's Business Academy — practice what they are learning by launching their own individual small businesses, attending a summer entrepreneurs camp, competing in business plan contests and joining their families in a special Family Small Business Development program.

Using a curriculum developed by the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE), the entrepreneurial program assigns each student the task of opening their own business. The students decide what product or service they will sell. They develop their own business plans, look for investors, negotiate with suppliers and, using $50.00 of "investment capital" supplied by the program, they acquire their inventory. To ensure that they have the right tools for their work, each is also given a NFTE "business bag," containing a calculator, a watch and a receipt book.

With names like *Movin' Marvin's Gift Items*, *Trinkets & Things*, and *JP's Supplies*, these start-up companies now sell a range of products in the school and at neighborhood fairs. To date, 75 sole proprietorships have opened at IS 218.

"The great thing about teaching entrepreneurship is that it is naturally a hands-on topic," said program director, Juan Casimiro. "This breaks the tradition of the teacher lecturing to passive students. In our program, the students go on field trips to purchase merchandise, open bank accounts, design their own business cards and advertisements, speak at conferences and negotiate with adults. This makes their learning more meaningful, but it also gives a tremendous boost to their self-esteem."

At the end of the school year last year, each new sole proprietor in the program took part in a business plan competition, in which they presented the plans they used to develop their businesses to an audience in the school auditorium. The four students who took the top honors became the leading officers of the newest venture at the school, The SUMA Store (Salome Ureña Middle Academies), that has opened in IS 218's lobby.

Designed, built and run entirely by students who took part in an intensive summer entrepreneurial "boot camp," the store has an inventory of over 300 items, from paperbacks to school supplies, and expects gross revenues to reach $50,000 this year. Part of this is reinvested in the store, the balance is used to fund student stipends, school activities and other new ventures.

In addition to The SUMA Store, seven new school-wide businesses have been launched. These include a Saturday car wash, a catering service, a T-shirt company, a baked goods company, a greeting card company that collects paper and recycles it themselves to make their cards, a fundraising business and a cafe that serves students in the school's after school and evening programs.

"I'm interested in encouraging empowerment in our community," said Mr. Casimiro. "Through this program, I can expose children to the legitimate opportunities that exist for them in the business world if they are creative and work hard. It would be hard to imagine that at least some of them won't succeed and come back to Washington Heights, bringing jobs, investment and change."

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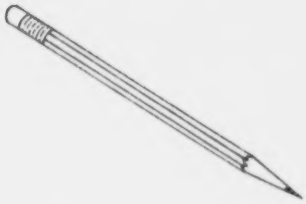
Academy and builds school ties to community leaders. Training programs in small business development are available for students and adults. Discussions are underway to establish a branch bank office or credit union in the community school.

More than anything, the community school concept at work at IS 218 and PS 5 is proving that if given the opportunities and support they need, all children can learn and thrive in school. The staff and students at these schools have come together to create a totally new school environment. And despite the violent neighborhood outside, the schools have become havens of calm and friendship. Children don't want to leave at night and they cannot wait to come back. That is a critical measure of success.



Notes

What Defines a "Community School"

The Community School Philosophy

Key Ingredients

What Defines a "Community School"

There is no single way to design and implement a community school. No single model can be expected to succeed everywhere. To be effective, communities must develop and tailor a community school program that reflects their strengths, resources and sensibilities, while meeting the unique needs of their children and families. Therefore, instead of presenting a rigid program design to follow letter-by-letter in developing your community school, we present to you an overall philosophy, a set of key ingredients and an example of what is possible, based on the experience of the Washington Heights community school partnership. Use this information as a foundation upon which you can create and build your own community schools.

The Community School Philosophy

When we talk about community schools, there is a tendency to focus on the services they make available and accessible to children and their families. But there is a much broader philosophy that governs IS 218 and PS 5 in Washington Heights and best defines what makes a school a community school. For those of us involved in the Washington Heights project, establishing community schools meant transforming our schools into revolutionary new institutions that strengthen entire communities — community and family institutions that house all of the services families and children need and that provide an arena for the community to come together to resolve its own problems, celebrate its successes and make life-long learning possible for everyone. This is the philosophy that led us every step of the way.

Key Ingredients

With this overall philosophy in mind, communities interested in developing community schools should keep in mind what might be considered the key ingredients of community schools:

COLLABORATION — Community schools should be planned and implemented by an active partnership that includes representatives of the school, parents, community leaders, and community social service agencies with a common mission, mutual goals and shared decision-making. Flexibility on the part of all team members is essential to adapt to a completely new system and style of working. The focus should be on the most cost-effective delivery of services. All opportunities to do more for children by linking with other community-based organizations or businesses should be explored.

SEAMLESS SERVICE NETWORK — Community schools should be designed to address the emotional, social and health needs of children and their families. This is best done through a social service network that works as a team. At IS 218, for example, mental health problems are not handled separately from physical health problems and school problems are not treated separately from health problems. Instead, the school team looks at the whole family and works together to develop comprehensive solutions.

EXTENDED SCHOOL DAY — More than latch-key after school programs, the extended school day program in the community school should dovetail with the class work children are engaged in throughout the day. The atmosphere may be a bit more relaxed, but it should be instructional and allow for hands-on projects that enable students to apply what they have learned in class. Teachers should play a critical role in designing these programs and may even teach the extended-day classes.

A FOCUS ON COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT — Community schools may start as centers of services, but should ultimately become centers of power, places where parents can be encouraged to help themselves and neighborhood residents can effect real change in their communities. In the long run, the community school should be viewed as a vehicle for the entire community to come together, identify their own goals and devise strategies for achieving them.

STARTING FRESH — The community school concept has to be developed from the ground up, not laid over some other approach that isn't working. Although a new building is not necessary, it must start from scratch with a team dedicated to working collaboratively to revolutionize the school.

HIGH LEVEL OF PARENT INVOLVEMENT — Parental involvement is critical to the education of all children, but is often lacking especially as children move into the middle grades. The community school must work to involve parents at all levels: as partners in planning the community school, as volunteers or staff within the school, as members of the parents association and one-to-one partners in their children's education. To encourage this involvement, critical support services for families are necessary and the school itself must be seen as a place for entire families, not just children.

LONG-TERM PARTNERS, NOT TENANTS — The social service provider or providers must be viewed as partners in the school in every way, not simply as tenants who use or rent the gym or classrooms from 3:00 to 10:00. And regular collaboration between school faculty and agency staff should reflect that sense of cohesion. Inherent in the nature of this partnership is a long-term commitment on the part of the agency and the schools. This is not a one-year project that will close if a key person takes a new assignment, but a permanent fixture in the community.

Overcoming Turf Issues

Issues to Confront

Potential Solutions

Overcoming Turf Issues

Creating community schools means creating one completely new institution out of several existing groups and institutions that often have their own agendas and concerns. This merging of disciplines and perspectives is a major strength of the community school, but it also can lead to some obstacles along the way.

Issues to Confront

Turf issues are bound to surface when you bring people who have different training and experience together for the first time in a common effort. Add to this the inherent power shift that occurs in the community school — away from the school board and principal alone and toward a shared partnership with community agencies and parents — and the potential for bruised egos and crossed signals can be great. In many ways, the initial relationship can take on the characteristics of an "arranged marriage." It may take some time to smooth over initial problems, but with foresight and realistic planning most of these issues can be resolved early on.

Some of the issues that may come up in the early stages of the collaboration include:

CONFLICTING WORK STYLES — Every profession has a standard by which they are accustomed to working. When you bring teachers together with social workers and other social service agency staff, the difference in work styles may cause some initial turbulence. For example, because of the time constraints and logistics involved in teaching classes all day, teachers may rely much more on formal written communiques, while social workers may be more comfortable with face-to-face discussions. These may seem like minor issues, but if they interfere with the flow of information and the development of a cooperative relationship, they will hinder the success of the collaboration.

SPEAKING DIFFERENT "LANGUAGES" — Even when everyone is speaking English, there can be language barriers. That is because within your partnership you will have a mix of lay people and professionals who have developed and refined their own distinct languages or jargon. Terms that have very clear meanings to some may come across as empty expressions to others. For effective communication to take place, these barriers will have to be broken down and a new common language will have to be developed.

PRIORITIES — An asset of the program is that it brings people with different expertise together to work as a team for children and families, but these groups will naturally have their own distinct priorities, rooted in their philosophy, training and personal history. If priorities conflict too much, a sense of competition can easily develop between community school team members. Instead, a consensus on common priorities should be developed and kept in focus at all times. The benefits of the partnership have to be greater than the fear of identity loss and shifts in agendas.

PARTNER V. TENANT — If social service agencies are viewed as tenants in the building, rather than integral members of the school team, many of the objectives of the community school will be difficult to accomplish. From the outset of the program, everyone involved in making this program work should be clear on the design of the community school and the rationale for this integrated structure.

CREDENTIALS — Professionals with years of training and experience in their fields are not always receptive to the ideas of parents or grassroots activists. Not all partners are going to have credentials that reflect advanced degrees or training, but their knowledge and understanding of the community and personal concern for its children can make their contributions critical parts of the mix. On the other hand, local activists with strong ties to the community may be suspicious of professionals who seem disconnected from the realities of the

neighborhood. Even among the professions, there may be some biases against one field or another. For the partnership to succeed, members have to come to recognize and respect the strength that comes from each partner's personal experience.

Potential Solutions

While you cannot plan for every glitch along the way, there are some preemptive strikes you can take against dissension in the ranks. Some ideas you should consider in planning are:

START SMALL AND BUILD GRADUALLY — You don't have to open a full-scale community school that incorporates all of the elements covered in this manual right away. You might consider starting with a small after school program and a Family Resource Center. Then you might add counseling and parent workshops. And then bring in medical services. By building up to a full program slowly, you can observe how well the collaboration is working in this limited scope and consider ways of resolving any issues that arise before the program grows.

PLAN TOGETHER — If all parties involved in the collaboration are also involved in the early stages of program planning, there is going to be an enhanced level of commitment and understanding of the program's goals and mission. Try to involve the teachers and social service agency staff who will be expected to work together on a day-to-day basis as early as possible.

BRING PARENTS IN EARLY — The sooner you involve parents in the community, the easier it will be to spread the word of your new program and gain lasting community acceptance and support. Parents will also have a lot of valuable information to share, especially when you are still at the drawing board.

SHARE DECISION-MAKING — No one likes to have new things thrust upon them without any input. Throughout the implementation of this program, from the design and planning stages to the daily operation of the school, those people who will be depended upon to make this program work should be consulted and given ample opportunities to express their views about new program elements or other changes. But shared decision-making and strong leadership are not contradictory. At various times, depending on the issue, one partner can and should become the group's natural leader.

TRAIN TEAMS TO WORK TOGETHER — Before the doors to your community school open, training opportunities should be arranged for teachers, agency staff, parents and school administrators to develop the skills they will need to make their collaboration work. Interactive workshops should focus on developing team building, shared decision-making and conflict resolution skills, as well as improving cultural sensitivity.

SCHEDULE FREQUENT MEETINGS — An ongoing effort should be made to develop a sense of unity between the school and agency staff. All community school staff should be brought together in meetings at least once a week to discuss upcoming activities, past successes or potential problems. These sessions can go a long way toward enlightening faculty and agency staff to the work that is going on in other areas, cultivating new friendships and chipping away at any barriers that might exist between these groups.

STAY FLEXIBLE — Above all else, the community school requires a willingness for all involved to be flexible. Do not expect everything to go exactly as planned and do not expect to be able to continue working just as you always have. Those people who are most capable of adapting to change and who welcome the opportunity to grow and innovate will be critical assets to your community school program.

Notes

Paying for Community Schools

Community Schools are Cost-Effective

Full Services, Small Incremental Expenses

A Menu Approach

Funding Strategies

Paying for Community Schools

Before you can determine what your community school will look like, you will need to know whether funding will be available to support your programs. But just as the community school allows for a whole new array of services for children through coordination and linkages within the community, it also allows for an array of funding opportunities and savings opportunities that can ensure that more of the community's spending for children goes directly to services.

Community Schools are Cost-Effective

Because of the scope of the community school described in this manual, some people may believe that it would be too expensive to establish one in their community. But one of the most promising attributes of the program is its cost-effectiveness. By locating all child and family services in a single facility, both schools and social service agencies have opportunities to save.

- ✓ Without rent or a stand-alone building to maintain, agencies can save a substantial portion of their occupancy costs.
- ✓ Outreach costs are reduced because the school acts as a natural outreach mechanism.
- ✓ Transportation costs are minimized because the children are already at the school.

These expense items may represent as much as 20% of an agency's budget that can be reinvested in services immediately.

From the school's point of view, there are also savings.

- ✓ Teachers are able to dedicate more time to education and less to non-academic issues.
- ✓ Money that the school does spend is more productive because students are coming to school much more prepared to learn.

✓ The school building no longer sits empty afternoons, weekends and summers, but has a natural constituency of community groups and other service agencies to whom it can be made available for a fee.

Full Services, Small Incremental Expense

It may help to think of the community school program in terms of costs per capita versus the current cost of public education. In Washington Heights our program is a comprehensive one, but it costs just a fraction of the cost of a public school education.

Consider this hypothetical example:

Community School Program Budget	$50,000
Number of Children/Families Served	250
Program Costs per Child	$200
Public School Costs per Child	$4,000
Incremental Cost of Community School Program	+5%

In this example, for a modest increase of 5 percent over current spending, children and their families are served all day, year-round, with a full range of services. And because services are part of a comprehensive program, not an isolated effort, classroom spending, health spending and social services spending all are leveraged for maximum impact.

A Menu Approach

The community school can be implemented on a modest budget or a much larger budget. If you think in terms of services that can be adjusted depending on resources, or phased in over time, you can start with a program of almost any size.

START-UP PROGRAM	MEDIUM PROGRAM	LARGER PROGRAM
After School Program	After School Program	After School Program
Family Resource Center	Family Resource Center	Family Resource Center
	Summer Program	Summer Program
	Health Screenings	Health Screenings
		Full Health Services
		Adult Education
		Small Business Development

Funding Strategies

To fund your community school you will have to draw on resources that already exist in current programs and promote the creative use and coordination of previously separate funding resources. Your funding sources should include government reimbursements, legislative grants, community foundations, private funders, in-kind gifts and fees. Your funding strategies should include the following:

REDIRECTING CURRENT FUNDS — Look at your current budget to determine where you might shift funds to school-based programs. This may mean moving

your after school program to the school or relocating two social workers to staff the Family Resource Center at the school. These moves represent no additional expense and may actually save you money in building maintenance and outreach costs.

EXPLORING NEW FUNDING SOURCES — Since the community school brings together a wider range of service providers, it can open the door to a spectrum of funding opportunities that may not have been available to each partner on their own. Social service agencies can become eligible for funding in education and school-based services, and schools can benefit from funding in fields like child protection, job training and health services. To capitalize on this, you will want to familiarize yourself with all possible funding sources, both public and private.

DEMONSTRATION GRANTS — The community school offers the opportunity for corporate and foundation grants as these funders increasingly become interested in supporting education reform efforts, cost-effective partnerships and models that can be replicated. Funders of research and community development projects may also be interested in the community school and the potential for a new approach to public school reform that can affect an entire community.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING — Though their funding practices have been characterized by rigid categorization in the past, more and more government agencies are now looking to fund programs that successfully leverage limited resources by building bridges and coordinating services within the community. The community school fits squarely into this strategy.

FEES FOR SERVICES — Even if it is a very low fee that reflects the financial means of the people you are serving, there should be a charge for at least some

of the community school's services. The Washington Heights schools charge a fee for summer day camps and adult education classes. Fees can give the people you serve a sense of ownership and self-help, as well as the motivation to stay involved. And in many cases, the fees you charge can enable a program to become self-funding.

While local costs and funding opportunities will always vary, one point is key: Even with a very limited budget, most communities can implement a community school program with the funds they are spending now.

Next Steps

Next Steps

Now that you understand the philosophy that drives community schools and have had the chance to see what a full-scale community school looks like in real-life, you should be ready to begin shaping your own community schools program. For you, the next steps are your first steps. Here are some suggestions for those first steps:

1. **GET SUPPORT FROM THE TOP** — If you think this program would work in your community, you are going to need the approval and support of top school officials and school board members. Go to them first with your proposal and vision.

2. **START AT THE BOTTOM** — Forge partnerships with critical players in your community. At the minimum, your team should include schools, school boards, parents, community leaders, social service providers and community-based organizations.

3. **ASSESS YOUR COMMUNITY'S NEEDS** — Conduct a thorough needs assessment in the community, measuring demographic and economic data, school conditions and performance measures and other data from the private and public health, education and social service sectors. Survey the number and scope of existing services in the community. Be sure to include in this planning process input from human service professionals, parents, school officials and the broader community through opinion surveys and face-to-face interviews. Keep cultural considerations in mind throughout your research.

4. **CLARIFY YOUR MISSION** — Once your team is in place and the needs of the community are clear, develop a set of goals, ground rules and a mission statement for the community schools partnership.

5. **INVESTIGATE FUNDING SOURCES** — Target both public and private funding sources for any additional funding that might be required. In some cases, existing resources may be leveraged or shifted from funding that already exists in the service areas you are considering.

6. **DEVELOP A DETAILED PROGRAM PLAN** — Considering the resources you have been able to secure, chart your vision of what your community school will look like, including the service areas you will pursue, staffing, governance procedures and a time line for implementation.

7. **START SMALL AND BUILD GRADUALLY** — Instead of trying to accomplish everything in your program design from the outset, consider implementing program components one at a time. By doing so, you may help to overcome turf issues and other potential obstacles while the program is still on a manageable scale. You could start with a Family Resource Center and a partial after school program; or start a health program with dental services and add medical later.

8. **ESTABLISH A MECHANISM FOR MEASURING SUCCESS** — From the start you should have a plan for gauging your success, based on the goals you have established for your program. This evaluation should be conducted by experienced professionals and should measure both "process" and "outcome" goals. Contact your local university schools of social work and education for help in conducting your evaluation.

9. **STAY CREATIVE AND FLEXIBLE** — Your community school program may look different in practice than it did on paper. That is not only natural, but advisable. Your plan and mission statement should serve as a guides, not straitjackets. In reality, your school should be evolving and allowing for exciting new possibilities and creative ideas every day.

Major change does not come easy. The temptation to maintain the status quo or to make only small adjustments can be strong, especially when you are confronted with challenges as overwhelming as those presented by our nation's schools. But too often small changes yield only small results.

Building a community school in your community means having the courage to bring about radical change; it means transforming and redefining forever how you and your neighbors view the school as an institution. It takes hard work, careful planning, full participation of all segments of the community, patience, creativity, and a willingness to hold the interests of our children above all else. Most of all, the creation of a community school requires an abiding belief that all children can learn and succeed in school if they are given the love, respect and support they need and deserve.

Other Resources/Suggested Reading

Organizations

Joining Forces
Washington, D.C.

Institute for Educational Leadership
Washington, D.C.

Family Resource Coalition
Washington, D.C.

Institute for Responsive Education
Boston, Massachusetts

Other Models

The Comer Process for Change in Education
New Haven, Connecticut

Contact: Edward T. Joyner, Ed.D., Director
School Development Program
Yale Child Study Center
55 College Street
New Haven, CT 06510-3208
(203) 737-4000

Schools in Communities Program
New York State

Contact: Lester W. Young, Jr.
Associate Commissioner
Office of School and Community Services
New York State Education Department
55 Hanson Place, Room 400
Brooklyn, NY 11217
(718) 260-2796

Beacon Schools Program
New York City

Contact: *Richard Murphy, Commissioner*
New York City Department of Youth Services
44 Court Street
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(718) 403-5200

New Beginnings Program
San Diego, California

Contact: Jeanne Jehl
Office of the Deputy Superintendent
San Diego City Schools
4100 Normal Street
San Diego, CA 92103
(619) 293-8371

School Based Youth Services Program
State of New Jersey

Contact: Roberta Knowlton, Director
School Based Youth Services Program
Department of Human Services
State of New Jersey
CN 700
Trenton, NJ 08625
(609) 292-7816

West Philadelphia Improvement Corps Community Schools
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Contact: Rae Scott-Jones
West Philadelphia
Improvement Corps
3901 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
(215) 222-8680

Suggested Reading

A Matter of Time: Risk and Opportunity in the Nonschool Hours, Report of the Task Force on Youth Development and Community Programs of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, Washington, D.C., 1992.

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